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Klarkash-Ton
 The Journal of Smith Studies
 NO. 1

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...a beam of marble capitals above the
... and then between the boughs and
... pillars of shadowy porticoes! A few more
... and we came to paper streets that ran
... the high road we were following, into a
... tall luxuriant woods on either
... thick overtopped the roofs of ancient
... houses...

We passed and again the silent
elder plantation ^{loomed} before us. As the
sun white and still as a pulchrous gem
deep shadows that lay around the
chill and winter and the thickest
shadows of death. It seemed that we
could not have stood for ages in this
stark, wintry, barren, than the specter
of the dead moon had touched the more
granite over since that universal empire
subverted by the progress of the white
Deceit.

"I wish it were daylight," murmured
 Marshall. His two tones were golden
^{and his words}
^{very} audible in the ^{dark} stillness.

^a *Peromyscus* *Erpallus*: *Erpallus* is growing representative? I fear that you mean *Erpallus* to the infantile *Gammie* of the study. But we have another fruit

21. Instead the brethren tell
erably by the demand we made upon
contingents and were marginal fairly the
shewly. We proceeded to as place a
had occasion which though it had been
out with matters at hand directness
not as great distance among the people
fired, separated apart from the other
in a ^{very} ~~small~~ ^{small} way. Had not wholly &

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Editorial

The prose and poetry of Clark Ashton Smith, while it has known periods of relative notoriety and even popularity, has heretofore never received substantial critical attention. It is with the hope of rectifying this situation that we welcome you to the first issue of Klarkash-Ton: The Journal of Smith Studies.

The work of Clark Ashton Smith appeared as a rich and unexpected flowering of Romanticism in the heyday of realism. His productions in both verse and prose are the reflection of a carefully conceived literary aesthetic; his style of writing is unique and instantly recognizable, his fantastic fiction demonstrates a striking and vivid imagination. For these reasons, and for many others, Clark Ashton Smith is well deserving of critical appraisal. In this and future issues of Klarkash-Ton we hope to present essays both new and old that will enable us to understand better the works of this complex and subtle artist; and we also intend to use this journal to bring previously unknown Smith material to light.

This first issue of Klarkash-Ton presents a major new piece of Smith scholarship, Douglas A. Anderson's "On the Authorship of As It Is Written", which argues convincingly (to these ears, at least) that the latest "Smith" hardcover to be published has nothing whatsoever to do with Smith. Anderson's article was originally written for the upcoming Starmont Reader's Guide to Clark Ashton Smith, at that time a collaboration between Anderson and myself, but was cut because of length. It has never been published (though a short summary of Anderson's conclusions has appeared in the recent Soft Books Smith bib-

liography), and was retrieved from one of Anderson's many drawers at the editor's request.

Amongst the reprinted material in this issue is the exquisite appreciation of Smith by the late Donald Wandrei, published before only in The Overland Monthly for December 1926. Wandrei's piece is a beautiful tribute to Smith and reads almost as if it were a prose-poem itself. Pioneering Smith scholar Donald Sidney-Fryer is represented here by one of his finest essays, "On the Alleged Influence of Lord Dunsany on Clark Ashton Smith", which besides addressing the central topic also makes many other insightful comments on Smith and his work. Fryer's essay first appeared in Amra #23 (January 1963). Richard Stockton's "An Appreciation of the Prose Works of Clark Ashton Smith", from The Acolyte, Spring 1946, is a good example of the early, enthusiastic articles written in praise of Smith and published in the "fan" press in the 1940-50s. In addition, the article is interesting in that we know Smith's reaction to it: he felt that Stockton "really showed some understanding of my work" (letter to S. J. Sackett, 11 July 1950, published in this issue).

Smith himself is represented in this issue by a group of letters to Robert H. Barlow, Samuel J. Sackett, and L. Sprague de Camp, and by the first publication of his original ending to "The Return of the Sorcerer", one of Smith's few works bearing some connection to the "Cthulhu Mythos".

For their help in making this first issue of Klarkash-Ton a reality, I give my thanks to Robert M. Price, Rah Hoffman, and David E. Schultz.

Steve Behrends

The Emperor of Dreams

by Donald A. Wandrei

"This may be a little too much of praise of Clark Ashton Smith, but at least it will bring comment and that is what we want," said George Sterling when we brought this article into our office for the December issue.

* * *

In 1912 there came from the press of A. M. Robertson, in San Francisco, a slender book of poems. Had that volume come from a well-known writer, it would have ranked him with the immortals. Had it come from a rising author, it would have spread his fame far and wide. It came from neither. It was little advertised, for it had no financial backing and the author had neither influential friends nor acquaintances among those who determine what the public may read. No attempt was made to popularize it. The book shortly passed from sight, almost unknown save to a few fortunate people who possessed copies. The book was, "The Star-Treader and Other Poems;" its author, Clark Ashton Smith, a young poet, not yet twenty, who had already dreamed and dared to dream as few men have in a lifetime. That book of poems is one of the great contributions to American literature. It contains some of our finest pure poetry, some of our best imaginative lyrics. A few of them would now be famous, had they been written by a Keats or Shelley, and a cause of laurels. The critics have ignored the volume. The literary pontiffs have passed it over. Today, not many persons know it, even by title. Yet the same critics decry the anaemic state of American letters, its lack of enduring works. A genius--in the

true, not abused, sense--appears, his eyes on the other side of eternity, his poems of eternity, his work the kind that endures. He is unnoticed. He is given no encouragement. American poetry is still anaemic.

A thousand years hence, when the people of that distant time survey the accumulated mass of all literature, they will place high up on the roll of honor the name, Clark Ashton Smith; and looking backward, they will ask why the world of that age long ago did not appreciate him when it had him. Perhaps this is as it ought to be. The man of letters should be the possession of those who do appreciate him. It is not given to ordinary man to walk with the gods; nor, when it is so given, does he usually avail himself of the opportunity unless he is one of that group which is the justification of himself, the cornerstone of the arts, and the prophet of immortality.

A poet can not live on visions, on dreams, on a prospect of future fame. He must live on something more material. And one can not write when it is necessary to earn a sustenance. Perhaps this was the reason that ten years elapsed before another book appeared under the poet's name. Or perhaps it was the neglect, popular, which is of little importance, and critical, which may be of the greatest importance, given his first book. Or perhaps the dreamer lived in his own realm, indifferent to ephemeral external life, writing seldom and then mainly for his own pleasure. Or perhaps . . . One trembles at the thought. "Ebony and Crystal"

was published in 1922. Its fate is akin to that of "The Star-Treader." Not many persons know it. Those who do regard it as worshippers a sanctum sanctorum, as connoisseurs a rare tapestry, as jewellers a priceless pearl. *

There is no place in contemporary prose and poetry for genius.

Was "Ebony and Crystal" worth the labor of ten years? It is a larger volume than the first and contains twice as many poems, one hundred and fourteen against fifty-five. Did eleven poems a year, and those not of unusual length, with one exception, justify the author a place among the front-rank poets? If fame is the criterion, no. If excellence, yes. "Ebony and Crystal" is the finest volume of pure poetry that has appeared in America since the opening of the twentieth century, perhaps the finest since the time of Edgar Allan Poe. Not until its publication did any of our poets approach him in imaginative power. "Ebony and Crystal" belongs on that shelf with Poe, Coleridge, Blake, Shelley, Baudelaire. In that group where each is coequally supreme, he may justly take his place.

Imagination is his god, beauty his ideal; his poems are an offering to both. He is the poet of the infinite, the envoy of eternity, the amanuensis of beauty. For even as beauty was deity to Keats and Shelley, so it is to him, and in its praise has he written. But he has not celebrated it as an abstract term or an aesthetic quality, but as a more tangible sub-

stance. He has constructed entire worlds of his own and filled them with creations of his own fancy. And his beauty has thus crossed the boundary between that which is mortal and that which is immortal, and has become the beauty of strange stars and distant lands, of jewels and cypresses and moons, of flaming suns and comets, of marble palaces, of fabled realms and wonders, of gods, and daemons, and sorcery. Time and Space have been his servants, the universe his domain; with the stars his steeds and the heavens his tramping ground, he has wandered in realms afar; and he has found there a wondrous beauty and a strange fear, the goal of his early dreams and the enchanted road to greater, all manner of things illusory and fantastical.

Some of his poems are like shadowed gold; some are like flame-encircled ebony; some are crystal-clear and pure; others are as unearthly starshine. One is coldly wrought in marble; another is curiously carved in jade; there are a few glittering diamonds; and there are many rubies and emeralds aflame, glowing with a secret fire. Here and there may be found a poppy-flower, an orchid from the hot-bed of Hell, the whisper of an eldritch wind, a breath from the burning sands of regions infernal. The wizard calls, and at his imperious summons come genie, witch, and daemon to open the portal to the haunted realms of faery; and their wonder is transmuted so that those who can open the door may listen to the murmuring waters of Acheron, or watch the passing of a phantom throng; and the fen-fires gleam; and the slow mists arise; and heavy perfumes, and poisons, and dank odors fill the air. A marble palace rises in the dusk, a treasure-house of gold, and ebony, and ivory; soft lutes play within; fair women, passionless and passionate, wander in the corridors; silks and tapes-

*I have since been informed that the silence was due to the destruction of imperfect poems, and to ill-health. It is hard to believe this statement in a day when the least is treasured by those whose best is mediocre. But it explains the uniform excellence of his work, the lack of a single weak poem.

tries adorn the walls, and fuming censers burn a rare incense. And fabulous demogorgon and hippogriff guard the golden gateway to the hoarded wealth. The sky is black. But now and again white comets blaze, or suns of green, or crimson, of purple, flame across the firmament with silver moons. The sky is burning. Stars hurtle to destruction or waste away. All mysteries are uncurtained. One may watch a landscape of the moon, the seas of Saturn, the sunken fanes of old Atlantis, wars and wonders on some distant star.

There is no place in the poetry of Clark Ashton Smith for the conventional, the trite, the outworn. It is useless to search his work for offerings to popular desire. Some authors pander to the public taste; their books may have a huge sale, but die with the author. Some writers have skill and ability but desire wealth or immediate fame; their work has not so great a popularity but endures longer. A very few have what is called "genius." They write primarily for themselves, or with a certain small group of people who know literature in mind. They are artists, word artists; and they fashion their prose or poetry with care and labor. They are seldom appreciated in their lifetime, and never have widespread popularity, but the highest minds of every age enjoy their work. These are ones who speak to us across the ages, who will speak across the ages to come. It is to this class that Clark Ashton Smith belongs. One will examine his poems in vain for the commonplaces that have so largely crept into our literature; and by so much as he has avoided ephemeral and written of immortal things, by so much the longer will his work endure.

"The Star-Treader" was his earliest volume, and it shows the ef-

fects of imagination in its first exuberance. Stars and suns and comets parade in all their majesty; Chaos, Infinity, and "the eldritch dark" are ever present; and the wonder, the inexplicable mystery of the Universe form the background of the book. It was then that the young poet wrote "The Song of a Comet;" it was then that he fashioned "The Song of the Stars;" and from his pen came "The Wind and the Moon." Of the fixed forms, the sonnet was his favorite, and nearly a third of the poems have its form. In most of them he strove to obtain single, dominant effects, to limn one unforgettable scene, as in "The Last Night," "The Medusa of the Skies," and "Averted Malefice." Occasionally, he was content with a single quatrain, or a pair, as "The Maze of Sleep" and "The Morning Pool." But he had a greater chance to display his power in the longer, more sustained poems, such as "Saturn," "The Star-Treader," and "The Masque of Forsaken Gods." They would have been accomplishments for a man of maturity, for one who had long written poetry, as the work of a youth they are remarkable achievements. The entire book has this note of maturity; it was a world-weary youth wise beyond his years who wrote these poems beautiful, fantastic, sometimes bitter and more than once inexpressibly terrible in their suggestion.

"The Star-Treader" was published in 1912. Not for ten years did another book come from the poet.** What had he been doing those ten long years? Had the neglect of his first book compelled him to turn his mind into other channels? It is hard to say, but "Ebony and Crystal" is not a large volume for the work of ten years.

**"Odes and Sonnets" was privately issued by the Book Club of California in 1918. The odes are from "The Star-Treader"; the sonnets were included in "Ebony and Crystal."

There is a great difference between the two, in imagery, in tone and subject, and in metrical skill. The first was, to some extent, experimental; the second, a fulfillment of the promise in the foreshadowing work. The craftsmanship of these later poems is wellnigh flawless; the volume is rich in perfectly planned, perfectly fashioned jewels. It is jewel-cutting that he was engaged in those ten years. Here may be found "such stuff as dreams are made of," and the dreams themselves; here the utterance of god and witch, the harmony of the spheres, the strains of immortal music, the unveiling of an imagery unparalleled. The beauty of these poems is intoxicating, for the poet who wrote them was haunted and intoxicated by loveliness immaculate and incarnate, by all beauty. And the poems are couched, not in ordinary language, but in an English filled with curious and archaic forms, rare or obsolete words, unusual diction; and they have been given flowing rhythms and unforgettable melodies; and they move in measured intonation, and in cadence, and in musical sweep that are seldom found in poetry. They are whispers of the unearthly, rather than mortal work. They are enduring forms of unending dreams and ideals and desires. They are the unattainable, set in deathless words of gold. They are time-outlasting marble; they are lotus and poppy; they are fadeless amaranth and asphodel, pure, perfect shadows of the pure and perfect, eternal, aeonian. They are star-dust and starshine, caught by a dreamer of the ages, fashioned in ebony and crystal. They are nectar and ambrosia, nepenthe, Lethean draughts to drown the world in forgetfulness and oblivion. They are the waters of paradise.

The poems are laden with a pagan, exotic beauty and imagery. Sometimes this takes the form of light and shadow, as in "Arabesque." Some-

times it deals with the lands of romance, as in "Beyond the Great Wall:"

Beyond the far Cathayan wall,
A thousand leagues athwart the sky,
The scarlet stars and mornings die,
The gilded moons and sunsets fall.
Across the sulfur-colored sands

With bales of silk and camels fare,
Harnessed with vermil and with vair,
Into the blue and burning lands.
And, ah, the song the drivers sing,
To while the desert leagues away—
A song they sang in old Cathay,
Ere youth had left the eldest king.

Ere love and beauty both grew old,
And wonder and romance were flown,
On fiery wings to worlds unknown,
To stars of undiscovered gold.

And I there alien words would know,
And follow past the lonely wall,
Where gilded moons and sunsets fall,
As in a song of long ago.

Occasionally it reverts upon itself as in "The Melancholy Pool" and "Solution:"

The ghostly fire that walks the fen,
Tonight thine only light shall be;
On lethal ways thy soul shall pass,
And prove the stealthy, coiled mor-
ass,
With mocking mists for company.

On roads thou goest not again,
To shores where thou hast never
gone,—
Fare onward, though the shuddering
queach
And serpent-rippled waters reach
Like seepage pools of Acheron,
Beside thee; and the twisten reeds,
Close raddled as a witch's net,
Enwind thy knees, and cling and
clutch

Like wreathing adders; though the
touch
Of the blind air be dank and wet,

As from a wounded Thing that bleeds

In cloud and darkness overhead—
Fare onward, where thy dreams of
yore

In splendour drape the fetid shore
And pestilential waters dead.

And though the toad's irrision rise,
As grinding of Satanic racks,
And spectral willows, gaunt and
grey,

Gibber along thy shrouded way,
Where vipers lie with livid backs,

And watch thee with their sulphurous
eyes,—

Fare onward, till thy feet shall
slip

Deep in the sudden pool ordained,
And all the noisome draught be
drained,

That turns to Lethe on the lip.

But usually it takes the form
of a rich imagery, oriental in its
profusion and splendour, unlimited
in its concept and scope, imperish-
able by reason of its supreme, its
unearthly, its alien perfection.
"In Saturn"—

Upon the seas of Saturn I have
sailed

To isles of high, primeval aramant,
Where the flame-tongued sonorous
flow'rs enchant

The hanging surf to silence: All en-
grailed

With ruby-corode pearls, the golden
shore

Allured me; but as one whom spells
restrain,

For blind horizons of the sombre
main,

And harbors never known, by singing
prone

I set forthrightly: Formed of fire
and brass,

Immenser skies divided, deep on deep
Before me,—till, above the darkling
foam,

With dome on cloudless adamantine
dome,

Black peaks no peering seraph deems
to pass,

Rose up from realms ineffable as
Sleep!

"The Kingdom of Shadows," "The
Land of Evil Stars," "A Precept,"
"Chant of Autumn," *Requiescat in
Pace*,—but it is useless to try
to select fine poems from a volume
which has room for none other.

There is one long poem, however,
that deserves special attention.
It is "The Hashish-Eater," contain-
ing many hundred lines of blank
verse. But it is far different
from what is usually called blank
verse, from what one knows as ordi-
nary iambic pentameter. This has
always been a stately metre, capable
of impressive effects; and in his
hands, with the aid of his boundless
imagination and descriptive powers,
besides his technical skill, it
has become the implement of a poem-
colossus, gigantic in theme and
treatment, told in a heavy, sonorous
English that sweeps onward in meas-
ured roll with an ever-swelling
rhythm from the imperial summons
of the opening lines:

Bow down: I am the emperor of dreams:
I crown me with the million-colored
sun

Of secret worlds incredible, and take
Thy trailing skies for vestment,

when I soar,
Throned on the mounting zenith, and
illumine

The spaceward-flown horizons infin-
ite.

And at the very end of a volume
which will one day be a prized lit-
erary heritage is the sombre and
morbidly magnificent prose-poem,
"The Shadows," a poem told with
such care that no word is lost or
wasted, and so well that it lingers
in the memory as a sable fantasy
enshrined, a rare perfume, darkly
odorous and darkly poisonous, cling-
ing to a bit of strangely shapen
ebony.

III

In October, 1925, came the third of his published books, "Sandalwood," a volume which, though slender, contains more poems than his first. After "Ebony and Crystal," not much could be added to his laurels, but had that volume not existed, "Sandalwood" might have taken its place to a large extent. It is different from "Ebony and Crystal" in that the poems are less ambitious with regard to the depicting of strange, vast splendour, but more songlike, lyrical, and spontaneous, though the mastery of technique and the metrical skill displayed admit of neither spontaneity nor its attendant roughnesses. The poems may be divided into several classes, including nineteen translations from Baudelaire, and four songs from the uncompleted romantic drama, "The Fugitives." And there is a poem of six stanzas, "We Shall Meet," told in an original or very rare but very beautiful verse form. But to one who has read the early work of Clark Ashton Smith, his later poems remain beyond praise. One may go into ecstasies at a vision of glory; but the greater glory surpasses description. And he who has sate on the ramparts of Heaven and Hell is mute before magnificence and pageantry that shame the speech.

No critic and no criticism can do justice to the work of this poet. There are some things which are beyond the reach of both, and in this rare group belongs the work of Clark Ashton Smith. For there are books so distinctive, so excellent, that they can not be compared with others of their class, by reason of their perfection. For them, there is no standard of judgment, and one can only admire what one is helpless to censure or to sanctify. To use homely language in estimating such work is to do it an injustice; and yet, superlatives are equally useless, for they have

been so carelessly employed that nowadays they deprecate the work they are meant to extol.

Earlier in this essay, certain other poets of the romantic-imaginative group were mentioned. But Clark Ashton Smith can not be associated with any particular one. Each within that class was original, and by virtue of a similar originality, this modern poet deserves his rank. The great poets neither follow nor imitate; they create. And he has created, on a cosmic scale. The greatest indictment of contemporary verse is its lack of form, its deliberate exclusion of the most vital quality of a work of art, a quality which every book that aspires to greatness must have, above all else, if it is to endure. Substance--form; form--substance; of the two, form is by far the most important. And this element--including, as it does, diction, style, presentation, euphony, craftsmanship--is present in the poems of Clark Ashton Smith to such an extraordinary degree that, had there been no substance, had he produced only rainbows and iridescent bubbles, he would still have deserved lasting attention. Indeed, the sole flaw in his poems is occasionally form in too great a degree. His gifts are so much beyond those of average poets, and his vocabulary is of such enormous content that the desired word is often an uncommon one. Yet even this lends a curious charm, a singularly effective atmosphere to the poem, at worst, it may only be considered what would be a god-send to the lamentably word-base verse of the Philistines. It is an example of his innate power of concentration, his ability to say best and to say beautifully the things that deserve to be clothed in costly raiment.

Just where the place of this emperor of dreams will ultimately

Continued on p. 25

On the Alleged Influence of Lord Dunsany on Clark Ashton Smith

by Donald Sidney-Fryer

Fritz Leiber has recently brought to my attention the article "Conan's Great-Grandfather" by L. Sprague de Camp in Amra v 2 # 17. In this article Mr. de Camp states in passing that Lord Dunsany influenced the writings of Clark Ashton Smith. Since Mr. de Camp has mentioned this in print on at least three other occasions (Science Fiction Handbook, Hermitage House, New York, 1953, page 79; Lost Continents, Gnome Press, New York, 1954, page 260; Amra v 2 # 13, in the review of Smith's collection The Abominations of Yondo under the heading "Scrolls & Such"), I assume it is a carefully considered opinion, and as such worthy of serious attention. I would, however, like to present a divergent point of view.

In the Lost Continents citation Mr. de Camp states that Smith's style is "based ultimately on Poe and Dunsany". While I admit to something of a superficial similarity between the respective subject-matters of Dunsany and Smith, I cannot admit to the style of Smith being based on that of Dunsany. However, Mr. de Camp is correct in singling out Poe as one of the authentic stylistic influences on Smith, as Smith himself acknowledged the influence of Poe, as well as that of Baudelaire.

Smith once told me that he first read some of Dunsany's output about 1920, but a mere reading is not sufficient to act as a profound influence on a writer--especially such a writer as Clark Ashton Smith, who chose his literary models very carefully--and Dunsany simply was not among them. Long before 1920, Smith had been creating poems where-

in are many themes and backgrounds similar to those of his later tales --circa 1925-1937.

There is a logical and unmistakable evolution in Smith's writing from his first juvenile efforts in prose (at the age of 11 Smith wrote imitations of fairy tales and The Arabian Nights, and later "long adventure novels dealing with Oriental life"), through his first professional short stories ("The Malay Krise", "The Ghost of Mohammed Din", "The Mahout", "The Rajah and the Tiger" in The Overland Monthly and The Black Cat, 1910-1912), through his published poetry, through his poems in prose, and finally on through his later tales, many of which are extended poems in prose. By the time Smith read Lord Dunsany, he was already gravitating toward the creation of tales set in imaginary worlds. He may have noted how Dunsany handled his materials and how Dunsany's style helped him to present his imaginary worlds, but Smith had already formed his prose style well before 1920--at least as early as 1914--and by 1920 he had already perceived, even if somewhat vaguely, the subject-matter for his later tales (to judge from the poems in prose of his Ebony and Crystal).

The superficial similarity of Dunsany and Smith forms an example of independent and (almost) parallel evolution. Such examples are not rare in the field of literature. For example, Alexander Montgomery and Edmund Spenser evolved a similar sonnet form of interlinking rhymes quite independently of each other. Many of the themes and backgrounds which appear in Smith's

three major poetry collections--The Star-Treader and Other Poems (1912), Ebony and Crystal (1922), Sandalwood (1924)--reappear in his later tales, and this logical development in Smith's creative evolution had nothing to do with any influence of Dunsany. Space would not permit the citation of all possible examples from the three aforementioned collections and the comparison of same with examples in Smith's later tales, and so a few generalizations will have to suffice, and two or three examples.

Through all three collections runs the theme of what may be called the cosmic-astronomic--this theme was undoubtedly suggested to Smith by the example of the poems of a similar nature by George Sterling--or the interplanetary and the interstellar; but the theme is treated most expansively by Smith in The Star-Treader. Also present are many poems dealing powerfully with the themes of death, destruction, and night, especially in The Star-Treader and Ebony and Crystal. Ebony and Crystal and especially Sandalwood contain many poems dealing with love in a manner of rare poignancy. And in all three are poems dealing with figures of classical (i.e., Graeco-Roman) mythology, as well as a few poems dealing with the "lost continents" of Atlantis and Lemuria (The Star-Treader: the sonnet "Atlantis"; Ebony and Crystal: the sonnet "In Lemuria"; Sandalwood: the quatrain "Lemurienne", this last added later to the printed volume; and in bits and snatches of other poems in all volumes).

Thus, Smith's preoccupation with death and imageries of death began very early in his literary career, and continued not illogically in the majority of his tales. When Smith came to write in the 1930's what may nominally be termed science fiction, a science fiction of interplanetary and interstellar themes and backgrounds, he was merely util-

izing material he had handled fifteen to twenty years earlier. From handling figures and gods of classical mythology in his poems, it was but a short and simple step for Smith to utilize in his tales, whenever the need or inspiration or both presented itself, gods of his own creation. And almost needless to mention, Smith uses lost continents as backgrounds for about one-fourth to one-third of his later tales.

Let me cite an example of continuity of theme, that of the Gorgon Medusa. In The Star-Treader there are the poem "Medusa" and the sonnet "The Medusa of the Skies", and in Ebony and Crystal there is the sonnet "The Medusa of Despair". And among Smith's later tales we find "The Gorgon".

Let me cite an example of continuity of background, that background of Smith's creation which features multiple suns. In the title poem of The Star-Treader Smith mentions a world "Where colored skies of systems triplicate / Bestow on planets weird, ineffable, / Green light that orbs them like an outer sea, / And large auroral noons that alternate / With skies like sunset held without abate."--and in Ebony and Crystal we have "Triple Aspect" (dealing obviously enough with three suns--each of a different hue) and in the sonnet "Desire of Vastness" Smith mentions a "trinal noon" (indicating a noontime of triple suns). For a continuation of background with multiple suns among his later tales, see "The City of the Singing Flame" and the Inner Sphere wherein the sky is "filled with many-coloured suns, like those that might shine on a world of some multiple solar system"; see "The Curse of Aforgomon" and the planet Hestan with its "four small suns"; see "The Maze of the Enchanter" and "The Flower-Women" and the three suns of amber, emerald, and carmine; see "The Demon of the Flower" and

the planet Lophai with the double suns of "jade green and balas-ruby orange".

Finally as an example of continuity of character-type, let me cite from Ebony and Crystal the poem "The Nereid", who "dwells forever, ocean-thralled, / Soul of the sea's vast emerald." Consult the tale "Sadastor" and compare the above nereid with the nereid-like siren Lyspial, who--born of the waters of the planet Sadastor--must die with those same waters.

Generally overlooked is the fact that a great many of Smith's so-called "tales of horror" are just as much tales of love. The theme of love so powerfully sounded in Ebony and Crystal and Sandalwood continues with equal force in his later tales, especially in such extended poems in prose as "A Night in Malneant", "The Planet of the Dead", and others.

As for the crowning poem in Ebony and Crystal--a poem only describable as a telescoped epic--"The Hashish-Eater; or, The Apocalypse of Evil": it is a veritable catalogue of things to come in Smith's later tales. The tremendous efflorescence of imagination in Smith's later tales, especially those of 1930-1934, is strikingly and unmistakably prefigured in the seemingly exhaustless flood of invented wonders presented in this, the longest of his poems. To list subject-matter and episodes (many of which are compressed tales in themselves) would be like reading an author's commonplace book, so pregnant is it with themes and backgrounds used in his later tales. The cosmic-astronomic element seen here is combined with extrapolations of monsters of classical mythology and with an entire repertory of objects of evil used by Poe, Baudelaire, and the French Symbolists; the whole poem being unified by the central figure of the Hashish-Eater, i.e., "the emperor of dreams" (which figure has

its analogies with "the Man-God" of Baudelaire, actually a very ancient concept). This extraordinary poem may have been composed after 1920, but its preview of things to come in later tales owes nothing to Dunsany. Something of its imagery and structure was suggested to Smith by George Sterling's "A Wine of Wizardry", which poem Smith first read in 1907 when he was almost 15, two years after Smith discovered the poetry of Poe.

Perhaps even more significant to the student of Smith's later tales is the inclusion in Ebony and Crystal of the twenty-nine poems in prose, a number of which Smith had composed prior to 1920, such as "Ennui", first published in 1918 in The Smart Set. Already much of the characteristic subject-matter of Smith's later tales is foreshadowed as a few titles will show: "The Traveller", "The Flower-Devil", "The Princess Almeena", "In Cocaigne" (this French-medieval imaginary land of idleness and luxury has its obvious analogies with Atlantis), and "From the Crypts of Memory". In fact, two of these--"The Flower-Devil" and "From the Crypts of Memory"--later served as the nuclei for the tales or extended poems in prose, "The Demon of the Flower" and "The Planet of the Dead", respectively.

From these poems in prose it was but a short step to the creation of the extended poems in prose, "The Abominations of Yondo" and "Sadastor", both composed in 1925, and from them to Smith's later tales. The first of these does have a slight Dunsanian flavor in its first paragraph, especially in the phrase "Yondo lies nearest of all to the world's rim", and in the first paragraph's concluding sentence: "Things have crept in from nether space, whose incursion is forbid by the gods of all proper and well-ordered lands [which seems especially Dunsanian]; but there

are no such gods on Yondo, where live the hoary genii of stars abolished, and decrepit demons left homeless by the destruction of antiquated hells [but this phrase has more a flavor of the wit of Voltaire or William Beckford than that of Dunsany]."

This brings us to a discussion of certain essential differences between Dunsany's tales and those of Smith, differences in style and subject-matter. First, note the dissimilarity between the imaginary worlds created by Dunsany as background for his tales and those created by Smith for his. Dunsany's worlds or lands are "beyond the East" and "at the edge of the world"; they are deliberately vague, with no pretension of geographical existence, on our globe or any other. Despite their fabulous creatures and events, Smith's worlds could exist or could have existed as real places on our planet (given as true that Atlantis-type lost continents existed). As for Smith's tales not laid on lost continents, they are placed either in real locales or in interplanetary, interstellar, or interdimensional lands that, while imaginary, pretend to exist as definite places.

To point up a further difference between Dunsany and Smith, consider a passage from Mr. de Camp's article "Conan's Great Grandfather": "Dunsany was a master of the trick or surprise ending. Many of his stories are mere anecdotes built around such an ending." The trick or surprise ending per se is rare in Smith's tales. While an ending might come as a surprise to the reader, the effect of surprise is subordinated to the overall mood of the tale. Smith usually sought to tell a story with the most rigid control; and the effect of inevitability, the result of such control, is what gives many of Smith's tales their characteristic power and impact, which could scarcely

have been achieved with purely trick or surprise endings.

Mr. de Camp's definition of Dunsany's tales as "children's fairy tales but on a sophisticated adult level" is a very apt one. What saves Smith's tales from becoming such, despite their outward trappings, is the extraordinarily intense conviction of belief and the depth of feeling they carry. Such conviction of belief and such depth of feeling are usually lacking in Dunsany, who seems to have the air of a worldly-wise and ingenious raconteur relating agreeable entertainments to a sophisticated audience. This is true not only of Dunsany's later Jorkens tall tales but even of much of his earlier and more sincerely intended prose, wherein Dunsany's creation of an elaborate mythology often appears to be an ingenious game, a game which doesn't evoke deep emotions in the reader. On the other hand, while one cannot systematically consider Smith's tales in their entirety as allegories (although they might be such in part), yet are many of his tales somber and stately parables of death, destruction, and darkness; of love, beauty, and wonder; of grief and nostalgia; of horror, terror, and fear; of hate and revenge; and of destiny and deity; and with many of these themes, especially those of love and death, combined in poignant and baroque synthesis, spiced occasionally with a strange humor and a merciless irony.

Dunsany's style, particularly of his earlier and perhaps best work, was modelled directly upon the King James Version of the Bible. Smith's style, while it may offer some slight affinities with a "Biblical" style, was manifestly not modelled after Dunsany, but after Poe (see especially Poe's "Shadow--a Parable", "Silence--a Fable", and above all "The Masque of the Red Death", which is the closest

thing in the canon of Poe's works to a tale by Smith) and after Baudelaire (see particularly the Petits Poemes en prose). Dunsany's prose style at its best achieves a gossamer quality. Smith's general prose style is one of serious and very stately pomp. Many of his tales, viewed theoretically as short stories, might indeed seem written in an "euphuistic" style. However, viewed as extended poems in prose, the tales no longer seem written in such a style but in one perfectly suited to the subject-matter. True euphuism a la John Lyly's Euphues often deliberately twists the subject-matter to suit the rhetorical extravagances; Smith manipulates his seeming "rhetorical extravagances" to suit the subject-matter. In Smith, the form exists for the subject, not the reverse. (Apropos Smith's style, it is interesting to observe that the last chapter of Sir Thomas Brown's Hydriotaphia has often been cited as the ultimate in stately splendor of style. Yet Smith in many, many instances easily surpasses Browne in this regard.) Smith's style, for all its depth of feeling or "Romantic" affinities, may best be described, I believe, in view of its rigid control and elaborate rhetoric, as "baroque".

I do not mean to disparage the literary achievement of Lord Dunsany. His important innovation, in my estimation, was the creation of a body of romance with his own deities taking the place of the gods of classical or other mythology, all with a system of proper names more elaborate and more scientific than the nomenclature systems of his predecessors. However, Dunsany, contrary to many of his predecessors, was not content merely to use an occasional god in his stories; his earliest volumes have as their manifest purpose the creation of an entire mythology. Smith's tales, although they may occasion-

ally feature some invented deities, do not have as their purpose the creation of a mythology per se. Surely the superficial similarity of kings, queens, kingdoms, palaces, temples, etc., in the works of both men is not enough to warrant calling Smith's tales "Dunsanian", merely because Dunsany preceded Smith by one or two decades.

As a final example of the essential differences between Smith and Dunsany, consider the difference in their attitude toward death. Smith relentlessly emphasizes the carnal qualities of death and dying; Dunsany does so never. In Dunsany, the change from life to death seems no more than the casting off of a garment. While Dunsany may make use of witches, he does not feature necromancers and necromancy in his tales as Smith does in many of his. Actually the importance of necromancy in Smith's works cannot be over-emphasized; it is another manifestation of "the Man-God", one of the principal themes unifying the entire output of Smith from The Star-Treader and Other Poems to his last published volume of poetry, Spells and Philtres. Since necromancers have the power to raise the dead and bring them back to a pseudo-life, a life that is not life (a baroque ambiguity), and since the bringing back of the dead to life or pseudo-life is presumably one of the prerogatives of deity; necromancers may be considered, at least in part, further versions of the Man-God.

Mr. de Camp has not been the only commentator who has alleged an influence of Dunsany on Smith. Edward Wagenknecht, well-known man of letters, once called Smith Dunsany's "American disciple (after a fashion)". To Anthony Boucher "the echoes of Lovecraft and Dunsany drown out [Smith's] own voice". In view of Smith's own creative

An Appreciation of the Prose Works of Clark Ashton Smith

by Richard Stockton

The prose of Clark Ashton Smith occupies a singular position in American literature: he represents the culmination, the final flowering, of the style called decadent, either in America or elsewhere. He is in a direct tradition that extends back to Poe, and we may well be proud of the fact that he is an American. His writings, though delicate, are by no means restrained, rather being luxuriant in the extreme; and though some may dislike the mould in which his stories are written, it is not for those to judge their value, for they will remain one of the achievements of our era, and there will be not a few who will wish to have been his contemporary.

His literary form has its antecedents in Oscar Wilde's *Salome*, in Baudelaire and the other French poets of the decadence, in Poe's esthetic theories, in Lord Dunsany's subtle colorings, and, in a measure, Walter Pater's carefully fashioned prose; but for anyone to infer that Smith imitates any of these styles would be a gross error; he is one of our most original authors. These brilliant writings, these jewelled works, are certainly some of the outré productions of this century; they are intense, highly concentrated; their words glitter like the scales of demoniac reptiles, lustrous, lacquered, metallic; their rich flow of verbiage strikes the brain and produces heavy, drugged visions, fantastic pageants of the senses all heightened and burning under the stimuli of his words. In his work is found an overwhelming luxury--the atmospheres on his planets are voluptuous, warm, languor-

ously scented and moist; air wherein may flourish monstrous plant-animals, and those strange, almost androgynous creatures so similar to human beings; odors, overpowering perfumes, subtle, exquisitely heavy scents, perhaps drugged, opium-tainted;--one has the impression that drugs are the cause of the supremely gorgeous phantasmagoria that pass before one's vision, but rather it is the poisonous euphony of the liquid syllables that flow so smoothly and in such torrents through the enchanted ear into and over one's stupefied brain; it is this that is the heady liquor that causes the intoxication; the drug-inspired visions of his work, the overwhelming, almost perverted, beauty seen everywhere. The inhabitants of his worlds, they that dwell in "jungles of poisonous and grotesque temples in Atlantis, Lemuria, and forgotten elder worlds and dark morasses of spotted death-fungi in spectral countries beyond earth's rim", in the "chaotic and incredible vistas of kaleidoscopic nightmare in the spaces between the stars", and in the "gorgeous, luxuriant, and feverishly distorted visions of infinite spheres and multiple dimensions"--(to quote Lovecraft), remind one of Pater's statement: "a strange complex of conditions where as in some medicated air, exotic flowers of sentiment expand, among people of a remote and unaccustomed beauty, somnambulistic, frail, and androgynous, the light almost shining through them."

He is not of his age; he dwells in his dreams, which are of marvelous textures and of wondrous designs; throughout the tapestries

that are his dreams run threads of scarlet and purple, interwoven with these are threads of gold, and this splendid fabric is overlaid with grotesque silver symbols, ideograms of unknown meanings. All through is a strangeness, a feeling alien, a cultivation of exoticism for its own sake.

He loves to see the light of a dying sun shine on the agate and onyx towers of cities long deserted; the pallid luster of moonstone; the iridescent gleams of peacock-feathers; the baleful glare and shimmer of dark opals, with hearts smouldering fires of forgotten and dimming suns, reflecting rich sanguine and murex-tinted rays; and above all he loves "the ultimate refinement that is close to an autumnal decay", the decadence attainable only to those civilizations of such great age as to have their very beginnings lost even in the most remote antiquity, that of which Verlaine said: "I love this word decadence, all shimmering in purple and gold. It suggests the subtle thoughts of ultimate civilization, a high literary culture, a soul capable of intense pleasures. It throws off bursts of fire and the sparkle of precious stones. It is redolent of the rouge of courtesans, the games of the circus, the panting of the gladiator, the spring of wild beasts, the consuming in

flames of races exhausted by their capacity for sensation, as the tramp of an invading enemy sounds."

He belongs to that school of writers who fashion their work as jewellers, lapidaries, fashion inlay-work with jewels, lacquers, and enamels set in precious metals, exquisitely carved; as Pater composed his cadenced sentences: with finely chiselled words and phrases written on lozenges of paper which were carefully arranged and rearranged until their places were found; he is one of those to whom a word is like a rough gem, which he cuts and polishes, shaping it to its setting, the whole work being burnished until it gleams like intense, white-hot burning fire. In his work emotions are refined to burning jewels, reduced to their finest essence, quintessentialised; --and this is noticeable in all of his work--everything is vibrant, restless, and with the malignant glare of a serpent's eye.

It is not only the prose poem with which Smith has worked and which he has graced; he writes poetry; he is a sculptor of no little merit; his illustrational work is greatly prized; to him we may offer the homage that goes to all great artists, whether they work in minor fields or otherwise, for he is one of them.

Continued from p. 13:

evolution, whereby he came to the writing of his later and most characteristic tales as a logical development which had nothing to do with Lord Dunsany, I find myself unable to agree with Messrs. de Camp, Wagenknecht, and Boucher. And I must conclude that they came

to their opinion because they lacked sufficient knowledge of Smith's earlier creative evolution. Smith's tales are no more "Dunsanian" than they are, say, "Arthurian" or "Spenserian"; and to describe them as such is misleading to the uninformed reader.

Letters from Auburn

Auburn-in-Malebolge,
May 16th, 1937.

My dear Bob:

No doubt you will be astounded to receive so prompt an answer from me. Once in an epoch, I really get the impulse to write a letter; and this time you're the victim.

I received the book on Beddoes which you sent me from HPL's library. Strangely enough, HPL himself sent me a copy of that same book two or three years ago! I believe he bought several of them. Do you want the copy that you mailed me--I hardly need duplicates?! The book has certain merits as a critical and psychological study; though I hardly feel that the author is temperamentally fitted to do full justice to Beddoes, who was a genuinely great and rare poet. As for my receiving other items from HPL's library, I certainly hope that Mrs. Gamwell will take her time. Though I should be glad to have whatever was left to my choice, there is no urgency whatever. I do little reading--and have less room for strange. My bookshelves are jammed full, with sculptures roosting all over the ledges and on the piled volumes at the top!

The typing of Lovecraft's mss. must certainly keep you busy. I have started to type excerpts from his letters to me for August and Donald, and have found it very slow work. A volume of representative letters certainly should establish him as one of the world's great correspondents. There must be a whole library of material buried in his correspondence. The letters to me in one year (1933) must aggregate forty or fifty thousand words if not more.

As to the Sterling letters, I got them together for safe-keeping

rather than anything else. They are now in a strong and supposedly fire-proof iron box. I hadn't thought of printing them, and have no money for such a venture anyway. On the whole, they are more personal than literary, and are in no sense comparable to Lovecraft's letters for general value and interest. One of them contains a far from fortunate criticism of Lovecraft's "Dagon", which I lent to G.S. in manuscript. G.S. thought the tale derivative (an exhibition of the common fallacy that all weird writing derives from Poe, Bierce, etc. G. wasn't much on nuances), and considered that it lacked sufficient "climax". It was, he complained, "all over in 30 seconds, like a rabbit's amour." He made the melodramatic suggestion that the monolith should fall forward and crush the worshipping monster! When I passed this suggestion on to HPL, the latter protested very gently and justly that it would hardly be in keeping with the atmospheric development he had intended.

What hurts me more than anything else about HPL's death, is the feeling that he might have lived for many years with proper recognition, financial recompense, and the nourishing food that his condition must have made doubly imperative. Truly, as you suggest, America has killed her finest artists. And when she hasn't killed them, she has driven them into exile, as in the cases of Hearn and Bierce. Personally I am goddamned sick of the killing process (I seem to die hard) and have fully and absolutely made up my mind to quit the hell-bedunged and heaven-bespitted country when my present responsibilities are over. I haven't any definite plans, but will probably gravitate toward

the orient. Anyway, I shall remove myself from Auburn, California and the U.S.A., even if I have to stow away on a tramp steamer.

As you surmised, I am not deeply enamored of the Republican system. On the other hand, I have no faith in any political or economic isms, schisms and panaceas. Any kind of a system might serve well enough, if human beings were not the stupidest, greediest and most cruel of the fauna on this particular planet. No matter what system you have--capitalism, Fascism, Bolshevism--the greed and power-lust of men will produce the same widespread injustice, the same evils and abuses; or, will merely force them to take slightly different forms. The Marxian motto: From each according to his capacity; to each according to his need, is no doubt a beautiful sentiment; but it is about as impractical, and little like to be practised, as the Golden Rule of Jesus Christ. From this, you can see that I am not a likely convert to Communism. I doubt if Communism could be established in this country without prolonged internecine warfare that would make the Spanish embroilment look like a Rotarian barbecue in comparison. The immediate result of revolutionary tactics will be to precipitate a dictatorship of the type now prevalent in Germany and Italy. I don't like to think of what will follow. Whatever ensues will hardly be to the advantage of artists and intellectuals: they'll be damned lucky if they even have pulp magazines to write for. In my opinion, the whole fabric of western civilization is nearly due for a grand debacle; and the spreading class-struggle will hasten rather than avert it. After that--well, it is a familiar platitude that the sun rises in the East.

As to conditions in Russia, I'll

admit that I know little about them and do not see how it is possible to know much without visiting the country and circulating freely among its people. Writers on the subject, whether for or against, are equally open to a strong suspicion of propaganda. Some of the strongest Communists, like Emma Goldman, seem to have soured on the idea after a sojourn in Russia. Though I have no religious beliefs myself, I must confess to a profound distaste for the anti-religious bigotry that forms an avowed feature of the Soviet program. In the name of Iblis, Satan, Thasaidon and Ialdabaoth, why can't they leave religion alone? In trying to suppress it, I believe they have made a similar error to the one made by the late tsar in suppressing vodka.

One other observation: Communism, as practised in the insect world, is a poor recommendation for its possible effect on humanity. Nothing sickens me more than to watch the mechanistic activities of ants, who have certainly achieved the ultimate in regimentation and co-operation. I guess I must be an anarchist myself; and I am sure I would be strictly non-assimilable in any sort of co-operative society, and would speedily end up in a concentration camp.

Don't think, from all this, that I am unsympathetic toward the revolutionary spirit, which is the natural reaction of youth when it awakens to the vision of social injustice. My own nature is that of the rebel: if it weren't, I would hardly write, paint and sculpt in the manners I have chosen. But, in the political sphere, history has convinced me that revolutions are futile: nothing is changed, except the codes and the masters.

Re certain other matters in your letter. Mrs. Gamwell sent me The Californian with your "Night Ocean", which HPL had put aside in an en-

velope addressed to me. I liked your story very much, and also enjoyed the one by Edkins.

I look forward to Leaves, which has a fine program. Offhand, I can't think of any good literate material to suggest. Weiss might have something. He has written some good tales, such as "The Smell" in Strange Tales and "The Dancer in Crystal" in W.T. My stories, "Red World of Polaris" and "The Metamorphosis of the World" were passably written, but suffer from triteness of plot: this because I wrote them at a time when I had not read enough science fiction to avoid the more obvious plot-ideas. "Mother of Toads" is a sort of carnal and erotic nightmare and I can't decide on its merits. Spicy Mystery Stories rejected it after holding the ms. for nearly two months. I have now shipped it to Esquire, which, judging from the two issues I have read, will sometimes print stuff that would hardly make the grade with an honest pulp. Wandrei's tales, and one by Arthur Davidson Ficke, are the only good ones that I have found in aforesaid issues. The magazine seems aimed at a rather naive class of readers who like to feel that they are wicked and sophisticated. I believe that a yarn like "Mother of Toads" would arouse considerable Sound and Fury if printed in that quaint periodical (Sound and Fury is the name of the letter department, as you know. It's a good name--one of the best things about Esquire--particularly when one recalls the Shakespearean passage from which it is taken. However, I must correct myself here--they no doubt took it from Hemingway.)

I have sold one yarn to W.T. recently ("The Death of Ilalotha") and have others under way. "Ilalotha" is quite good, I believe, especially in style and atmosphere. It is unusually poisonous and exotic. Writing is hard for me, since

circumstances here are dolorous and terrible. Improvement in my father's condition is more than unlikely, and I am more isolated than ever. Also, I seem to have what psychologists call a "disgust mechanism" to contend with: a disgust at the ineffable stupidity of editors and readers. I think that some of my best recent work is in sculpture: and there I find myself confronted with another blank wall of stupidity. Oh well and oh hell: some one will make a "discovery" when I am safely dead or incarcerated in the bughouse or living with a yellow gal in Cambodia.

Yours for the bombing of Philistia and Boetia with Chinese stinkpots--Clark Ashton

P.S. On glancing over this letter, I note a few asperities of tone, and, in place, a lack of Arnoldian "sweetness and light." In extenuation, I must plead that I have been pretty much at the boiling point lately.

I believe the late R. E. Howard and I would have had a grand time together lambasting civilization; that is, if I have not been misinformed as to his views. Barbarism, barbaric art, barbaric peoples, appeal more and more to me. I could never live in any modern city, and am more of an "outsider" than HPL. His "outsideness" was principally in regard to time-period; mine is one of space, too.

Auburn, Calif.,
June 30th, 1949.

Dear Mr. Sackett:

Thanks for your letter and the enclosed check. I was indeed glad to hear from you. I haven't any ash-trays at the moment but will cut you one as speedily as possible and send it on.

As to biographical data for your sketch, I'm glad to give you what I can, which isn't really a tre-

mendous lot. To begin with, I was born on Friday the 13th, Jan. 1893 at a ranch-house belonging to my maternal grandfather, Hiram Gaylord, in Long Valley, Cal., only a few miles from my present dwelling-place. The Gaylords are an old New England family, descendants of Huguenot refugees who left Normandy late in the 16th century and settled for a generation or two in Somerset and Devonshire; later (1630) emigrating to Massachusetts. The name was Anglicized from Gail-lard. The family claims descent from an armigerous Norman house dating back to the Crusades, and has a published genealogy. My grandmother was of Scotch-French Canadian extraction; my first name, Clark, being her family name. My father, Timeus Smith, was the son of a rich Lancashire iron-master who had married into the local gentry; and I get my second name, Ashton, from my paternal grandmother. My father did a lot of globetrotting (Brazil, Australia, etc.) before he finally settled in California.

My childhood was happy enough, apart from rather frequent illnesses which made my school attendance intermittent. All told, I doubt if I really spent more than four years at the old red school-house; but I did acquire an early taste for reading, and began to scribble fairy tales, modeled mainly on Andersen and the countess D'Aulnoy, at the age of eleven. A little later, I branched into long and involved narratives derived from the Arabian Nights, Beckford's Vathek and the Indian tales of Kipling. Then I began to write verse, including, I remember, some lame imitations of the Rubaiyat. Gradually I acquired a feeling for meter and rhythm; and at sixteen or seventeen was able to sell a few poems to magazines. At the same time several of my short stories (contes cruels with Oriental themes) were accepted by the Black Cat and the

Overland Monthly. In spite of such encouragement, I abandoned fiction for a number of years and wrote only poetry, of which four volumes were in print by 1925. Then, incited by Lovecraft, with whom I was corresponding, I wrote my first weird story, "The Abominations of Yondo", which appeared in the revived Overland and drew many howls of wrath and derision from readers. But I did not really settle down to fiction-writing for another four years; when the partial failure of a small income made it necessary for me to earn some sort of living.

My experience of journalism, concerning which you inquire, was limited to the writing of a column for a local weekly paper, The Auburn Journal. In 1923 the Journal Press published my third volume of poems, Ebony and Crystal; and the column was written and continued more or less for several years, to discharge part of my indebtedness to the printer. It consisted of epigrams, translations from the French, and original poetry; sometimes containing a single short poem; and bore a variety of names, such as "Cock-tails and Creme de Menthe", "The Devil's Note-Book", "Paradox and Persiflage", and "Points for the Pious". I fear that it was not universally popular with readers: some of my epigrams were considered a bit too pointed. I enclose a few clippings, which you are welcome to keep. Most of the stuff seems rather cynical and flippant; but I still like some of the more serious apothegms.

I have taken various workaday jobs, lasting from a few days to a few weeks or months; the longest being intervals of ranch-work during the first years of the 2nd World War, when such labor really counted as war-work. The hardest labor I have ever done was well-digging and cement-mixing by hand (the well was dug for the local nunnery) and the nastiest was the spraying of

fruit-trees with such infernal chemicals as arsenic, bluestone and sulphur. And once, for a whole week, I typed bills in a water-company's office. But I fear that I have little taste for honest labor. No doubt I have missed some promising opportunities: the rag-picker at the local city dump once offered to take me on as assistant!

For a period of ten years (from 1918 to 1928) I made numerous paintings and drawings, ranging from the weird and grotesque to the decorative and semi-naturalistic. Some of these pictures were exhibited in various Coast cities and in New York; a few were sold and many given away. Since that period I have done little pictorial work, apart from a few illustrations for my own stories that were used in Weird Tales. These were hardly representative of my best, since my real forte lies in color rather than in black and white line-work. Lately I have felt an urge to resume painting and have started by retouching some old pictures. Also, I have begun to experiment with the possibility of making pigments from local earths and minerals and have made various tints, mostly browns, yellows, reds, purples and greys, which can be used with a tempera medium such as white of egg. Blues and greens are harder to get; but certain copper minerals, such as azurite, bornite and malachite, should afford them.

Sculpture is the most recent of my several arts or endeavors--I began it almost by accident. In 1934 I enjoyed a visit from E. Hoffmann Price, who wished to secure some mineral specimens for a museum curator in the East. So Price and I paid a visit to an old copper mine of which my uncle was then part owner. We came back with an auto-load of various rocks, ores and minerals; and from among these I kept a few specimens for myself. After the stuff had been lying

around the cabin for a year, it suddenly occurred to me that I might carve something from a lump of it; the result being the head of a hybrid grotesque something between a hyena and a horned toad. I don't know just how many carvings I have done since; but the total must be climbing toward the 2 hundred mark. I don't seem able to keep many for myself, since the pieces now sell about as fast as I can make them, or sometimes faster. Some have been shipped as far afield as Hawaii, England and South Africa.

My sculptures are nearly all cut from solid materials; though I have done some experimental casting (not too successful) in plaster and clay; and have recently modeled one piece, a fountain-figure of Dagon, from potter's clay. Some of my materials are in the nature of fossils, or technically to be classified as such: that is to say, they are part of a "cast" of mineral matters which still retains the form of an herbiferous dinosaur! The creature was buried in ancient days by volcanic mud, and was exposed by the excavation of a local railroad cut. Whatever bones there were have long since been removed. I suppose what is left could be classed as dinosaur steak. Anyway, it winds diagonally upward for 18 or 20 feet in the wall of the cut. Climbing for hunks of it is a rather tricky business, since most of the wall is rotten shale; but recently I secured a fresh supply with the help of some friends. Incidentally, the bowl and mouthpiece of your pipe were cut from these materials; and I shall make your ash-tray from a piece of the same.

As for authors who were formative influences, I think Poe should head the list. Baudelaire and George Sterling in regard to poetry, and Lovecraft and Dunsany in respect to prose, should be added; though I think some critics tend to exaggerate the Dunsany influence. A

poetic influence that no one seems to have pointed out is that of Oscar Wilde's fantastic masterpiece, The Sphinx; but it seems evident in many of the poems of Ebony and Crystal. Lafcadio Hearn, Gautier and Flaubert (the latter at least in The Temptation of St. Anthony) have all helped to shape my prose style. I do not think that my paintings and carvings show any perceptible influences: whatever resemblance they have (if any) to other art is purely coincidental. One critic said that my carvings showed a study of pre-Columbian art--of which I have seen almost nothing! And having seen only two or three of Odilon Redon's paintings, I am still unable to decide whether there is any basis for comparing my pictures with his.

Do you need any bibliographical information for your article? If so, let me know. My poems and stories have gotten into many anthologies, some of which I have never seen and whose names I can't remember; and some have even been included in school-text books. If you get the Arkham House booklists, you will have seen the announcement of three future volumes, Selected Poems, The Abominations of Yondo, and Tales of Science and Sorcery. And I have a part-written book-length fantasy, The Infernal Star, which I hope to finish some day; also, numberless plots and synopses for short stories.

I have received some fine British write-ups recently, by Walter Gillings in The Fantasy Review. And the current Famous Fantastic Mysteries has me among its Masters of Fantasy with a nicely worded blurb and a villainous drawing.

Well, I hope this rambling and desultory discourse will be of some use to you.

Cordially,

Clark Ashton Smith

Auburn, Calif.,

July 11th, 1950.

Dear Sam:

Thanks for the sketch, which I have read over carefully, checking several obvious errors made by the typist.

Your data are substantially correct, apart from a few minor points. Poe, not Omar Khayyam, was the first poet who impressed me, and I'll never forget the thrill of finding his poems in a grammar-school library at the age of thirteen. I remember too that the librarian commented reprovingly on my morbid and unhealthy taste in reading-matter!

Arthur A. Hillman is in error on one or two points. The changes in "Dweller in Martian Depths" were not made by me but by the editor, David Lasser, and were made without my knowledge. The original text of this tale, under its original title, "The Dweller in the Gulf", will appear in my next volume of tales. The worst thing about the alterations was, that they were crudely done.

Also, it is hardly true that I was forced to discontinue writing fiction, since there has been no time when my tales were not in request among editors and readers. The chief reason was my own growing disgust with pulp fantasy and with the restrictions imposed upon writers.

James Blish's critique is new to me, and I find parts of it quite astounding. No doubt a wider scholarship on Mr. Blish's part would enable him to assemble a much longer list of alleged "influences," including writers that I have never read! He has missed some of my favorite poets, including Keats and Beddoes, and apparently does not take Huysmans or Ambrose Bierce into account in tabulating sources (?) for my prose! For the bane of every new creative artist, the world is full of people with Mr.

Blish's turn of mind--that is to say, people who can see nothing but resemblances either real or fancied (usually the latter) and who can always be depended upon to miss or ignore the essential differences between a new talent and its predecessors.

Incidentally, the phrase "super-terrestrial fairylands accurst" which Blish quotes as being from Lovecraft, is really taken from an appreciation of my poetry written by Benjamin De Casseres.

Blish, too, is obviously one of those who refuse to admit the ornate literary style (such as that of Sir Thomas Browne) as a legitimate form of art. On this point, I might quote Lytton Strachey, who thoroughly appreciates Browne and wrote a fine essay upon him. "There is a great gulf fixed between those who naturally like the ornate and those who naturally abhor it." As Strachey points out, argument is useless. . . .

As to my own employment of an ornate style, using many words of classic origin and exotic color, I can only say that [it] is designed to produce effects of language and rhythm which could not possibly be achieved by a vocabulary restricted to what is known as "basic English". As Strachey points out, a style composed largely of words of Anglo-Saxon origin tends to a spondaic rhythm, "which by some mysterious law, reproduces the atmosphere of ordinary life." An atmosphere of remoteness, vastness, mystery and exoticism is more naturally evoked by a style with an admixture of Latinity, lending itself to more varied and sonorous rhythms, as well as to subtler shades, tints and nuances of meaning--all of which, of course, are wasted or worse than wasted on the average reader, even if presumably literate.

Among writers who have praised my poetry highly, you might add to your list Ambrose Bierce, Vachel

Lindsay, Robert Haven Schauffler, Stanton Coblenz, Lilith Lorraine, and the late British poet, Alice Meynell.

I enclose some reviews and appreciations, including the one written by De Casseres, which you have probably not seen. There have been many others, but unfortunately I have not kept all of them and have mislaid others. For instance, there was a fine write-up by Stanley Mullen in The Gorgon about three years back; and another, written by one Richard Stockton (who really showed some understanding of my work) appeared in The Acolyte.

As to coinages, I have really made few such apart from proper names of personages, cities, countries, deities, etc., in realms lying "east of the sun and west of the moon." I have used a few words, names of fabulous monsters, etc., drawn from Herodotus, Maundeville, and Flaubert which I have not been able to find in dictionaries or other works of reference. Some of these occur in "The Hashish-Eater", a much-misunderstood poem, which was intended as a study in the possibilities of cosmic consciousness, drawing heavily on myth and fable for its imagery. It is my own theory that if the infinite worlds of the cosmos were opened to human vision, the visionary would be overwhelmed by horror in the end, like the hero of this poem.

I hope I have made it plain that my use of rare and exotic words has been solely in accord with an aesthetic theory, or, one might say, a technical theory.

I had intended to write and thank you some months back for your letter returning my French verses with the criticism of your Lithuanian professor. Curiously enough, he, not I, was in error in two instances out of three--the third being due to my own carelessness in not actually checking up on a word.

Incidentally, some of my French, and also my Spanish, verses have

been praised by scholars deeply grounded in these languages. Lately I have concentrated on the study of Spanish. I'll enclose a specimen or two of Spanish verse, which has been checked over by a local professor.

I hope that you and your wife will be able to come up during the summer. Let me know beforehand, since I may be away for a week or two, at a date not yet determined.

I enjoyed George Modell's last visit here in company with his wife, and hope they will be able to repeat it ere long.

My best to all of you,
Clark

P.S. I'm not sure when my poems will appear, since publication is being held up by the exorbitant cost of printing. My next prose volume, The Abominations of Yondo, is evidently scheduled to precede the poems, and should be out early next year, if not sooner.

Auburn, Calif.,
Oct. 21, 1952.

Dear Sprague:

I have your letter of Oct. 17th, and feel a little embarrassed in answering by the paucity of autobiographical detail that would be suited to your purpose. (I'm not nearly old enough yet to write my Confessions!)

As for my education, that's easy enough to answer, since it has been mainly self-conducted, highly irregular, and largely a matter of following my own vagrant and varying inclinations. I did graduate from grammar school and register for entry into high school. But my real education began with the reading of Robinson Crusoe (unabridged), Gulliver's Travels, the fairy tales of Andersen and the Countess D'Aulnoy, The Arabian Nights and (at the age of 13) Poe's Poems. Poe

seems to have confirmed me in a more or less permanent slant, which led later to Baudelaire and the French Romantic School. Beckford's Vathek, read at the age of 15, was another early influence. I did a lot of boyhood scribbling, imitations of Omar, lurid Oriental romances, etc.; and at 17 sold several pseudo-Orientales to the Black Cat and The Overland Monthly. Curiously enough, after that I wrote little but poetry for a number of years, and dabbled a lot in painting and drawing, the pictures being mainly grotesques and fantastic exotic landscapes. I think it was mainly Lovecraft's interest and encouragement (I began to correspond with him in 1922) which led me to experiment with weird fiction. My first genuinely weird tale, "The Abominations of Yondo", was written in 1925 and appeared in The Overland Monthly, evoking, I was told, many protests from the readers. In the fall of 1929 I began in intensive campaign of fiction-writing, both weird and pseudo-science, for which, I am going to confess frankly, the influence and coercion of a woman-friend was largely responsible. The bulk of my published tales were written between that time and 1935. I might add that out of my total fictional output (probably around 110 completed stories) very little has remained unsold, and this little is mediocre--which, I fear, applies to some of the published yarns also.

As for other occupations, these have been largely seasonal or part-time jobs, such as orchard work and garden work--fruit-picking, thinning, pruning, etc. I have done a little mining but dislike working underground. And I did take a flier in journalism for a while: the contributing of a column of epigrams, verse, etc., to a local newspaper. The epigrams were a little too sophisticated for their audience and I was no doubt lucky to escape incarceration in the coun-

ty jail. Also I have dabbled a lot in small grotesque sculptures and, to my surprise, I have sold nearly my entire output. But I am giving up such work for the present because of the heavy eyestrain entailed and, for the first time in years, have gone back to fiction-writing. Two shorts, written since the middle of September, are in the mails, and I am going ahead on a third. The tales are quite varied--one, "Schizoid Creator", being a fantastic satire that mixes black magic with psychiatric shock-treatment (the patient being a demon!) and the second, "Morthylla", a tale of Zothique, concerning a pseudo-lamia who was really a normal woman trying to please the tastes of her eccentric poet-lover. The one that I am writing at present, "The Theft of the Thirty-Nine Girdles", is told by the Hyperborean thief Satampra Zeiros whom you may remember if you have read Lost Worlds. The theme is the stealing of the golden and jeweled chastity girdles worn by the virgins (!) of a Hyperborean temple. Satampra has taken on a moll, an ex-virgin of the temple, who is really quite a help to him in this delicate enterprise.

Re your other questions. I never met Lovecraft, and have never been very far east of the Sierras. However, I corresponded with Lovecraft till within six weeks of his death. I've met a few other fellow-practitioners--Price, Wandrei, Williamson, Fritz Leiber Jr., and Edmond Hamilton; and every so often one or two or three or four "fans" drift into Auburn. I enclose a rather good snap of myself taken some years back with a couple of the latter. The youth in the middle is Laney, who edited The Acolyte. I look about the same now (a pretty healthy object on the whole) with the addition of a small imperiale.

No, I don't run, and hardly expect to run, a motel. On the other hand, I am not the recluse that

certain current fables have represented me as being. I do not live in a remote part of the Sierras; and I do not keep "a pack of savage dogs to ensure my privacy." In fact, I've kept nothing but cats for a number of years. The last one, a tom, disappeared some time back; and I haven't tried to replace him, since I do too much catting around myself to make a good master for cats, who find it increasingly hard to live on the land in this game-depopulated section.

That unfinished novel must have been The Infernal Star, which I began a number of years back as a prospective three-part serial for W.T. I drafted the first part (around 12,000 words) but somehow never went on with it. The hero was an innocent bibliophile who, through an amulet found behind the cracked binding of a volume of Jane Austen, was drawn into a series of wild and sorcerous adventures leading to a world of the star Yamil Zakra, the center from which all cosmic evil, sorcery, witchcraft, etc., emanate. I'll try to finish it if I can sell enough shorts to finance myself for awhile. A better idea, though, is The Scarlet Succubus, a projected short novel of Zothique, which I'm carrying in my head. The conception takes a hint from Balzac's yarn, "The Succubus", in The Droll Stories, and will exploit the imaginative and mystic possibilities of sex--an angle that seems rather neglected in this day of raw and mundane realism.

As to reading--I do not read any set number of books a year and would hate to undertake such a feat. In fact, I have a way of passing up what most of the world is reading. I buy an occasional fantasy or science fiction magazine to get a general idea of the current trend, or trends. Of books that I have read at all recently, I might instance The Spear in the Sand, by Raoul Faure, and The Adventures

of King Pausole by Pierre Louys as being among those that have most impressed me. Among living writers, probably I admire Aldous Huxley and Walter de la Mare as much as any. But my tastes are fairly eclectic, running as they do from Lovecraft to John Collier, from Maupassant and Flaubert to Fritz Leiber Jr.

Among other dabbings that I have neglected to mention is the translating of French and Spanish poetry, and also a few attempts to write verse of my own in the aforesaid languages. Among my few unpublished masterpieces is a short play in blank verse, The Dead Will Cuckold You, which could easily be turned into a prose yarn of Zothique for Weird Tales.

I might add that I write slowly and painstakingly, with much recasting and revision. Much of my old work strikes me as being hasty, over-verbose and sometimes hackish. I have a number of ideas, also many written synopses, which I hope to work out. But I believe that my tendency will be away from horror of the Zothique or Lovecraftian type, toward fantastic satire, drol-

lery and what-have-you. Also, there should be room for some good inter-planetary that would avoid the current glibness, dryness and matter-of-factness.

I have enjoyed the fantastic humor of your own tales, and must buy The Rogue Queen, which sounds most alluring. And I'll look forward to The Tritonian Ring. Will gladly autograph any copies of my own books that you send on.

Hope this medley will be of a little use. I'll look forward to seeing you when you reach California. Don't forget!

Clarkash-Ton

I enclose an astoundingly complete bibliography of my published fiction, compiled by a New Zealand admirer.

Continued from p. 32:

I was beyond horror, beyond terror; and I do not believe I could have stirred again if it had not been for the thing that happened now. As if the animating and uniting power had been removed with the completion of its task, the headless cadaver toppled to the floor, scattered in all its original portions. The life had gone out of the eyes in that terrible head; and there was nothing but a heap of mouldy members, beside the fresh segments of that other.

The spell was broken. I felt that something had withdrawn from the room--the overpowering volition that had held me captive was gone. It had released me, even as it had released the corpse of Helman Carnby. I was free to go; and I fled from that ghastly room and ran headlong through an unlit house, and into the outer darkness.

Clark Ashton Smith
Jan. 4th, 1931.

Continued from p. 8:

be fixed in poetry can not, of course, be foretold, save that it should be very high. Nor can one prophesy the day he shall receive the recognition he has earned. It took the world forty years to appreciate Thomas Lovell Beddoes; it took longer for it to appreciate William Blake; Arthur O'Shaughnessy is still almost unknown; and few even of those occasional persons who have read "The Book of Jade" could tell the name of its author, Park Barnitz. And now, Clark Ashton Smith--

Atlantis, Xiccarph

by Marjorie Farber

[Review of Lost Worlds, New York Times, 19 November 1944]

This is the latest in a series of occult writings which Arkham House has been exhuming from the pages of Weird Tales, Wonder Stories, Strange Tales and Astounding Stories, to be enshrined in book form. This one, even more than its horrifying predecessors--the collected works of H. P. Lovecraft, Henry S. Whitehead and Donald Wandrei--deserves to be put on the shelf and admired; it cannot be read.

The object of all these tales is, of course, the creation of new worlds in which to house whatever of fantasy, horror or demonology the imagination can contrive. Mr. Smith deals with Atlantis, Hyperborea, Uzalदारूम, Mhu Thulan, Zothique, Xiccarph and other "Lost Worlds" dating before the "great Ice Age."

What is most fascinating about the present volume is the kind of obfuscatory prose which readers of Weird Tales, etc., are apparently willing to overcome for the sake of getting at whatever terror may lie at the end of the skull-dotted trail. For example:

"What loathly spawn of the primordial slime had come forth to confront us we did not pause to consider or conjecture. The monstrosity was too awful to permit of even a brief contemplation; also its intentions were too plainly hostile, and it gave evidence of anthropopathic inclinations, for it slithered toward us with an unbelievable speed and celerity of motion, opening as it came a toothless mouth of amazing capacity."

Another feature of this style is its use of two words in place

of one: "consider or conjecture," "speed and celerity of motion." Why Mr. Smith failed to say a "mouth of amazing and astounding capacity" I don't know; perhaps he was in a hurry. Dealing as he does with primordial monsters and with death and decay, he often has occasion to speak of the smells accompanying such phenomena. For these he has developed a wonderful set of synonyms, such as "the unfamiliar fetor I have spoken of previously, which had now increased uncomfortably in strength." Or "Opening the sealed door, they were met by a charnel odor, and were gratified to perceive in the figure the unmistakable signs of decomposition."

I have no doubt that the pages of this book, which I have been turning over so admiringly, conceal a wealth of imagination. But I am reminded of an old Cummluthian proverb which can be roughly translated as, "He who would sing must beware of the lotus," or "Do not give opium to those you would teach." There is another proverb, dating from the Age of Steam, which comments simply, "The blood of Poe is running very thin."

[Smith's reaction to this review is given in his letter to August Derleth, 13 December 1944:]

I too was rather amused by the N.Y. Times review; especially by the complacency with which the lady displays her ignorance of the finer shades of meaning in English words. One might well "consider" without conjecturing at all; and vice versa. Even her attempt at sarcasm fails

down, since "amazing" is far from synonymous with "astounding," the first meaning to perplex or confuse with fear, terror, wonder, etc., and the latter to overwhelm or stun with awe, etc. But of course such nuances are lost on the average reader, and unknown to, or unheeded by, the average present-day writer. . . . However, if a style of writing both rounded

and precise is an "obfuscatory" style, then I suppose I must plead guilty. I am wondering, too, what she would have had me write in place of the sentence that she quotes from "Malygris." I suppose I should have said, "The corpse stank," which would have been in accordance with modern standards of direct and stream-lined realism. Nurts to the slitch.

In the mid-late 1950s, Smith was projecting Far from Time, a paperback collection of his science fictions and weird tales. It was for this collection that Ray Bradbury's introductory note, which has appeared in In Memoriam: CAS and is due to appear in Arkham's The Best Fantastic Tales of Clark Ashton Smith, was written.

The contents page for this projected collection, preserved in the Smith Collection at Brown University, reads as follows:

The Eternal World
 Vulthoom
 A Star-Change
 The City of the Singing Flame
 The Monster of the Prophecy
 The Uncharted Isle
 The Vaults of Yoh-Vombis
 The Plutonian Drug
 The Maze of Maal Dweb (added at a later date)
 The Return of the Sorcerer
 The Double Shadow
 The Willow Landscape
 A Night in Malnéant
 The Garden of Adompha
 The Disinterment of Venus
 The Door to Saturn
 The Weird of Avoosl Wuthoqquan

On the Authorship of *As It Is Written*

by Douglas A. Anderson

In 1982 Donald M. Grant published a novelette entitled As It Is Written, with its authorship credited to Clark Ashton Smith. Found in the files for the never-published December 1, 1919 issue of The Thrill Book (a magazine which had previously published a Smith poem), the story was bylined "De Lysle Ferree Cass". The attribution of authorship to Smith was based on stylistic similarities and circumstantial evidence.

But since 1982 further evidence has come to light that would suggest otherwise. For it has been discovered that this De Lysle Ferree Cass also authored other works, some highly unlike Smith's. These include one full-length book and six additional stories (some very long); and it has furthermore been discovered that Cass wrote (or planned to write) two other items, for which copyright was filed at the Copyright Office in Washington, D.C.

Cass's book was part of a juvenile series, on the "Airship Boys", and was entitled The Airship Boys in the Great War; or, The Rescue of Bob Russell. Published in 1915, by the Chicago firm Reilly & Britton, it was the last title in a multi-volume series. Most of the series had been written by H. L. Saylor, under his own name and under pseudonyms. (Interestingly, Saylor wrote another series on the "Aeroplane Boys" for the same publisher, under the name Ashton Lamar.) But Saylor died in 1913; a few further of his "Airship Boys" books came out, followed by the Cass book, and with it the series ended.

"As It Is Written" aside, all six of the other known Cass stories

were published in All-Story, in 1913 or 1914. The magazine was then undergoing a series of title changes, and to avoid bibliographical confusion, the full references to these stories are given below:*

"Oahula the Carnivorous", All-Story Magazine, March 1913, pp. 609-19.

"Pilgrims in Love", All-Story Magazine, part 1 in September 1913, pp. 94-106; part 2 in October 1913, pp. 442-59.

"The Love Caprice", All-Story Magazine, November 1913, pp. 606-21.

"Love Goes Blindly", All-Story Magazine, December 1913, pp. 833-45[?].

"The Man Who Could Not Die", part 1, All-Story Magazine, March 1914, pp. 624-34; part 2, All-Story Weekly, 7 March 1914, pp. 161-69.

"The White Spot", All-Story Cavalier Weekly, part 1, 24 October 1914, pp. 707-41; part 2, 31 October 1914, pp. 137-52.

In the Copyright Office it has been discovered that three works by Cass were registered for copyright. The first was his book, discussed above. The other two items were of small import, being mere references, but they add some information to our knowledge about

*I must acknowledge here my indebtedness to Will Murray for some of the specifics of the references, and to Donn P. Stephan for his persistence in getting me copies of the stories.

Cass. First, in June 1912, the Selig Polyscope Company of Chicago applied for copyright for Higher Education and the Motion Picture, by Cass. Second, in April 1915, W. D. Boyce, also of Chicago, applied for copyright on Cass's behalf for three chapters of something called Change in Erica; or, A Love Story of Finland. It remains to be determined if these last two items were ever published, either in periodicals or otherwise.

Clearly the most important and substantial body of work by Cass is his seven original stories, the juvenile series book being undistinguished. It is worthwhile to look at each story singly, before commenting on them as a whole.

"Oahula the Carnivorous" is set on an island in the South Pacific. Oahula, the favorite daughter of Kahiki-ku the King, is to be married against her wishes, and the tall white castaway recently discovered is to be the main course at her wedding feast. But Oahula falls in love with him, and together they escape to the demon-haunted portion of the island, where they believe they will not be pursued. Many weeks pass. And when the white man sees a ship, he scorns Oahula, and madly tries to reach the ship as a hurricane descends upon the island. He is washed ashore again, but Oahula is disheartened, and sends her father's servants to capture him. The white man will indeed be a part of her wedding feast.

In "Pilgrims in Love", Mirllep, a beautiful slave-girl, is bought by Hossein Aga, a son of the Shah of Persia. Hitherto blind to women's charms, the young man succumbs, and marries her. The couple moves to Vienna, where Hossein Aga is an ambassador. There, Mirllep finds that she fears the Occidentals, and she remains secluded in their home, giving rise to odd rumors about her amongst the local

gentry. They coax Hossein Aga into hosting a party, and when he is drunk they persuade him to call for Mirllep and unveil her. Mirllep obeys, but then flees in horror and embarrassment, resenting Hossein Aga for what he has made her do. She finds refuge with one of the local gentry, and the affairs of state become greatly agitated. Hossein Aga must depart Vienna, and learning this Mirllep forgives him and returns to him, finding him miserable over what he had done to her. They depart Vienna.

In "The Love Caprice", the court of Prince Jozef rides out on tour of their dominion. Pan Lucats, a gentleman of the court, sees the beautiful peasant-girl Marya, daughter of old Izak the scavenger, in the crowd of supporters, and he tosses her a gold-piece. Later Pan Lucats purchases the girl from her greedy parents, to be a servant to his own mother. Pan Lucats comes to love her, and eventually tries to force her. Marya resists, and pushes him down forcibly. Then he lays still, with blood trickling from his forehead; and believing she has killed him, Marya flees. She meets her old lover Trouvor the goatherd, and they flee into the mountains. Pan Lucats recovers, and forgives her, even sending his own servant to find her and give her his jewelled ring, which she is instructed to sell so that she may live in comfort.

"Love Goes Blindly", like "The Love Caprice", is set in Eastern Europe. Here Nikolai Iaroslav, a great nobleman, is in love with Vera, a common woman betrothed to Tomasz. Late in the night before the wedding she is to meet Nikolai, but she oversleeps the appointed tryst. Hurrying there she is followed by Tomasz's boarhound. It fights with Nikolai and is shot; Nikolai and Vera flee with great fear of pursuit. But they are caught by Vera's father and Tomasz,

who kills Nikolai and gouges out his eyes. Vera then truly awakes--it is her wedding morn, and she has had a nightmare.

The title character of "The Man Who Could Not Die" is the Count Florenz Von Regenstein, a young Viennese reprobate who, when about to kill himself, sees someone he despises treat a woman roughly, and he kills him instead. The Count is sentenced not to death, which he still desires, but to life imprisonment. Even in prison he is thwarted from taking his own life. And in the prison's gardens he meets Hildegard, the daughter of the prison's head turnkey, whom the Count decides he will pretend to love in order to gain her help in escaping. After escaping, Hildegard's mother confronts him and accuses him of using Hildegard. She asks him to tell her of one good deed in his life, and he is dumbfounded until Hildegard's sister enters the room. The Count sees her and realises that she is the woman who had been saved by the bullet with which he had killed the despised man. This he tells to Hildegard's mother, as repentance for his past life fills him, and he vows to marry Hildegard. He will give up his title and position, and take her to America.

"The White Spot" tells the story of the beautiful slave-girl Ferukhanz, whose only fault is the white spot on her forehead, which indicates leprosy. She is first desired by the Vizier Tahmuraz, who casts her away upon discovering the white spot, but she is rescued by the bandit-chieftain Firouz, who at first is also horrified by her and her white spot, but who later comes to realize that he still loves her. And since at last a man cares more for her than for life itself, she reveals that she is clean: the white spot had been placed on her forehead as a protection against violence, and it has preserved her undefiled for her lover Firouz.

"As It Is Written" is the story of a fugitive, Datu Buang, who incurred the wrath of a powerful prince and who was forced to flee into the jungles of Malaysia to save his life. Eventually he stumbles into the zenana of Swu Pnom, Rajah of Selangor. There he encounters the Rajah's pet ape, of near-human intelligence, called Malu-udong, and slays the creature. Then he finds Giauvara, a beautiful woman bought by the Rajah to be his head-wife; she and Datu Buang fall in love. When they are discovered by the Rajah, Datu Buang kills him. The lovers escape and marry, changing their names to Tantalum and Kala. Their son they name Datu Buang.

The seven Cass stories show a distinct unity of style, frequent recurrences of images and ideas between the stories themselves, and a fixation upon romance, often between members of conflicting social castes. Clearly they are the work of one writer. Thus if "As It Is Written" were indeed by Smith, then the rest of the Cass canon would, by implication, need be added to Smith's bibliography. Therein many problems arise, for most of the Cass canon does not at all resemble any of Smith's writings nor reflect any of Smith's attitudes. "As It Is Written" seems a special case, both in circumstance and in style; but in close analysis it certainly shares more affinities with the other Cass stories than with anything by Smith.

If one looks at Smith's and at Cass's stories solely on a stylistic level, dissimilarities abound. Unlike in Smith, none of the Cass stories are particularly fantastic. None of Cass's settings resemble those used by Smith. Certainly Eastern Europe, Persia, Malaysia, and the South Pacific hardly compare with Averigne, Hyperborea, Zothique, or even Smith's own version of Auburn, California. Even in use of plot (as well as the plot-

lines themselves) the Smith and Cass stories differ greatly. Smith wrote mainly for atmosphere, viewing plot and characterization as encumbrances. Smith wrote episodically, with a fluidity from one episode to the next, but with little thought about how some minor happening in an early episode might be tied into the story later for greater effect. In only a few of Smith's stories are such plot elements combined, the story tied up into a whole, the denouement so fulfilling; whereas in the Cass stories the plotting is more precise, and the direction of the story is more interwoven between the beginning and the end than in Smith's tales. Smith often overcame his failing with plot by his fluidity in style, together with his remarkable use of metaphor and imagery. Little such usage of metaphor is found in Cass's tales.

On top of the stylistic arguments against a Cass-Smith connection, there is a lack of any concrete evidence for making a connection between the two. Smith has clearly stated that, other than his juvenilia and his four early stories published in 1910-1912, he wrote no further fiction before the 1920s. And there is no real reason to disbelieve him. There is no hint in Smith's correspondence of any other writing than what is usually credited to him. Nor is there even the slightest scrap of evidence amongst the vast collec-

tion of Smith's papers and manuscripts (which includes his juvenilia), held in the John Hay Library at Brown University, to support a claim of authorship by Smith for any of the Cass material.* It is absurd to assume that Smith could completely conceal such authorship, and one would really wonder why he might even wish to conceal it.

On the Cass side of the matter, it is interesting to note that all of the Cass works date from 1912-1915, save for "As It Is Written", and that the three Cass items registered for copyright were all sponsored by Chicago firms. This, all taken together, suggests the separate existence of De Lysle Ferree Cass, perhaps in the vicinity of Chicago. Little else can be safely opined, save that it may be suggested that Cass's apparent silence in writing from 1915 to 1919 may have been in some way due to World War I.

It seems clear, then, that none of the De Lysle Ferree Cass material is by Clark Ashton Smith. "As It Is Written" should henceforth be excised from Smith's bibliography. And De Lysle Ferree Cass, whoever he was, will pass into history not for any qualities in his writings but rather as a figure who, with one story, fooled the critics.

*I must thank Steve Behrends for checking on this.

Conclusion to "The Return of the Sorcerer"

We present below Smith's original ending to "The Return of the Sorcerer" (1931; Out of Space and Time), as preserved in the H. P. Lovecraft Collection of the John Hay Library of Brown University. The text below replaces the ending of the published version, from the paragraph which begins "Again I paused, and could go no further" to the tale's conclusion.

Smith sent the carbon for the first version of "The Return of the Sorcerer" (which also bears the early titles: "Dismembered", "A Rendering from the Arabic", and "The Return of Helman Carnby") to Lovecraft in early January 1931. In response to Lovecraft's reaction to the story, Smith wrote: "I was greatly gratified by your reaction to 'Carnby'--a tale to which I devoted much thought. The more veiled ending you suggest as possible was my original intention--certainly it would have been the safest and most surely successful method . . . If the tale is rejected as too gruesome, I can try the other ending" (Letters to H. P. Lovecraft, letter #20); the "other . . . more veiled . . . ending" eventually became the ending of the published version. It seems, however, that Smith did not wait for a rejection before scrapping the story's original, more explicit conclusion.

THE TEXT

I seemed to know with a loathly prescience the sight that awaited me beyond the sill. But the reality would have put to shame the foulest enormities of the nether pits. Carnby--or what remained of him--was lying on the floor; and above him stooped an unbelievable thing--the nude, headless body of a man, already blue with incipient putrefaction, and marked with earth-stains. At wrist and elbow and shoulder, at knees and ankle and hip, there were red sutures where the sundered limbs had been knit together in some hellish fashion, by the power of a will that was more than mortal. The Thing was holding a bloody surgeon's saw in its right hand; and I saw that its work had been completed. . . .

Surely, it would seem, I was viewing the climax of all conceivable

horror. But even as the Thing knelt with its ghastly tool suspended above the remains of its victim, there came a violent crash from the cupboard, as if something had been hurled against the door. The lock must have been defective; for the door burst open, and a human head emerged and bounded to the floor. It rolled over, and lay facing the medley of human remnants, that had been John Carnby. It was in the same condition of decay as the body; but I swear that the eyes were alive with malignant hate. Even with the marks of corruption upon them, the features bore a manifest likeness of [sic] those of John Carnby; and plainly they could belong only to a twin brother.

Continued on p. 25

Reviews

Clark Ashton Smith, The Dweller in the Gulf and Mother of Toads. Necronomicon Press, 1987, \$2.50 each.

(Reviewed by Stefan Dziemianowicz)

In his annotation to a letter dated March 1, 1933, in Clark Ashton Smith: Letters to H. P. Lovecraft, Steve Behrends notes: "Upon the publication of 'The Dweller in the Gulf' in the March 1933 issue of Wonder Stories, Smith discovered that his conclusion for the tale had been severely and inexpertly edited. As a result of this episode, Smith wrote no further tales for Wonder Stories. A significant market was thereby closed to him, and this incident contributed to his withdrawal from fiction in the mid-to-late 1930s." A statement like that calls for further explanation, and Behrends supplies it with his restored edition of "The Dweller in the Gulf," the second book in the Necronomicon Press's "Unexpurgated Clark Ashton Smith" series.

"The Dweller in the Gulf" appears to have had a curse on it from the start. Farnsworth Wright rejected it under its original title, "The Eidolon of the Blind," as too gruesome for Weird Tales. The next potential market, Strange Tales, went out of business. Smith retitled the story "The Dweller in the Gulf," and sent it to Hugo Gernsback who sent it back with suggested changes. Smith tried Weird Tales one last time, found Wright adamant, and reluctantly made the changes Gernsback suggested. The story appeared in Wonder Stories under the title "The Dweller in Martian Depths," sans much of Smith's description and with the ending, of which Smith was particularly proud, mangled.

When The Abominations of Yondo was put together, Smith restored the story's original ending. For this edition, Behrends has gone back to Smith's first draft of "The Eidolon of the Blind" and used it as his guide for removing new passages that appeared in the final draft sent to Gernsback. Although Behrends includes the Wonder Stories ending as an appendix, you'll have to compare this booklet to the Arkham House edition of the story to see what changes Smith made to please Gernsback, and any reader with a copy of The Abominations of Yondo should, for it reveals much about Hugo Gernsback's ideas on science fiction and why Smith should never have submitted stories to this vital (for him) market if he had any reservations about artistic compromise.

In a nutshell, "The Dweller in the Gulf" concerns three Earthmen prospecting for gold in the Martian outback. Driven into a cave by a storm, they encounter a race of blind creatures who hustle them into a cavern where they all participate in an orgiastic ritual around the eidolon of a monstrous beast. When the men try to escape, the monster itself appears and drives them back to the other creatures.

The story is as much a mood piece as anything else Smith wrote. Once inside the cavern, it could have taken place in the Arizona desert or some earth locale as well as on Mars (and perhaps it should have: Smith's spacemen walk around Mars without suits and armed with Colt revolvers). Gernsback, though, wasn't big on mood. He was big on scientific fact and often published fiction in which the explanation of a gadget or a theory was the whole plot of a story. This

could explain why in his second draft Smith introduced Chalmers, a bedraggled archaeologist who pops out of the blind horde long enough to explain to the Earthmen the origin of the monster and its worshippers and what will happen to the three of them. With this change, Smith not only sacrificed the surprise at the end for the sake of "scientific" credibility, he also violated the nightmarish quality of the Earthmen's experience by introducing dialogue into a part of the story that was originally told through description and sense impression.

Smith also had to "harden" his science for Gernsback. In the original draft, he describes the power emanating from the eidolon of the dweller in these terms: "From it, in heavy ceaseless waves, a dark vibration surged: an opiate power that clouded the eyes; that poured its baleful slumber into the blood." This was changed to: "From it, in heavy ceaseless waves, there surged an emanation which could be described only as an opiate magnetism or electricity. It was as if some powerful alkaloid, affecting the nervous through superficial contact, was being given off by the unknown metal." (Surely Smith must have been poking fun without Gernsback realizing when he continued: "Musing drowsily, they tried to explain the phenomenon to themselves in terms of terrene science; and then, as the narcotism mounted more and more like an overwhelming drunkenness, they forgot their speculations.")

Gernsback's altered ending was really unnecessary, and perhaps the only explanation for it is that he published lots of stories with heroes who got out of scrapes at the end and may have felt the ending as Smith wrote it was too bleak. The appendix shows that Smith had every right to be furious. Several sentences indicate that whoever did the surgery probably didn't

understand the meaning of some of Smith's words.

It comes down to this: Gernsback should have rejected a story that Wright should have accepted. However, in 1933, in spite of Gernsback's hardware bent, science fiction and fantasy were just beginning to disentangle themselves from one another and Gernsback may have been under the impression he could make a fantasy story science fiction if he could pump enough fact into it. If so, it shows as much arrogance on his part as it shows bad judgment on Smith's for agreeing to make changes in the first place. The upshot of this debacle was "The Boiling Point" controversy that bubbled in The Fantasy Fan and Smith's virtual withdrawal from fiction writing for several years (although I'm puzzled by Behrend's observation that Smith didn't publish anything in Wonder Stories again until "Great God Awto" appeared in the re-named Thrilling Wonder Stories in 1940; the copy-right page of The Abominations of Yondo shows that "The Dark Age," the story on the contents page directly after "The Dweller in the Gulf," appeared in Wonder Stories in 1938).

Sad to say, but by 1938, several such incidents of editorial and editorially induced tampering must have left Smith feeling whipped. When "Mother of Toads" was bounced by Spicy Mystery Stories and Esquire, he didn't even submit the story to Wright before purging 300 words of mostly erotic description from the text. Wright accepted it the first time, so we'll never know how much of Smith's cutting wasn't necessary, though Behrends notes that Smith used Wright's rejection of "The Witchcraft of Ulua" as a "sex story" three years earlier as a guide.

Because Smith did the editing himself, not much is lost from the story except explicit descriptions of the title character's anatomy.

Most of the material came out in a three-paragraph-long scene. Several changes were easy: in the line "I'd rather drown in marsh waters than sleep with you again," for example, Smith substituted "stay" for "sleep." Still, Smith must have felt foolish doing this kind of nitpicking, especially because at its heart the story remained what it had been from the start, a grotesque seduction scene. It's ironic that Smith felt compelled to remove specific references to breasts and thighs, but knew he could get away with writing in the abstract ("the lumpish limbs and body had grown voluptuous") or suggestively ("His blood, a seething torrent, poured tumultuously and more tumultuously through his members").

Whether or not these restored texts will show as much about Smith as restored texts did for Lovecraft remains to be seen. It is to be regretted that Arkham House has decided not to use Behrends' texts for their forthcoming collection of Smith's best stories. Behrends' scholarship is to be praised. It shows that Smith was justified in his battles with editors, and it reveals that Smith's half-romantic allusions to being out of step with his time only partially concealed a truth of which Smith was very aware: outside of Weird Tales, and perhaps one or two of the more short-lived fantasy magazines, there was no market for Smith's type of fiction. Had Smith published several decades before, he might have found a comfortable home in "decadent" journals like The Yellow Book. Several decades later, he might have gained esteem coming in the wake of J. R. R. Tolkien (though the Ballantine Books' Adult Fantasy editions of his books were poor sellers). But in the 1930s, there was really only one editor who appears to have understood him even some of the time, and so the margin

for error was slimmer for him than for either Lovecraft or Howard. It will be interesting to see in future entries in the "Unexpurgated Clark Ashton Smith" series how far from that margin Smith strayed before being forced back.

Joseph Bell, ed., The Books of Clark Ashton Smith. Soft Books (89 Marion St., Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6R 1E6), 1987, \$8.95

(Reviewed by Stefan Dziemianowicz)

You wouldn't think Clark Ashton Smith had generated enough bibliographic material to fill 28 8½ x 11 pages but here it is: 67 editions of stories, poems, essays, letters and biographic material--everything from The Star-Treader and Other Poems (1912) to Letters to H. P. Lovecraft (1987)--annotated chronologically, with an alphabetical cross-index and index to the short fiction that appears in the books.

The major value of this bibliography is that it brings together under one cover not only Smith's professionally published hardcovers and the numerous paperback recombinations, but also the small and amateur press titles put out by Roy Squires (who assisted in the compilation), Gerry de la Ree, Mirage Press and Cryptic Publications in the quarter-century since Smith's death. Annotation is kept to a minimum for each book, with only a little more information than you might find in a card catalogue (assuming you could find something of Smith's in the library). The one exception is Douglas A. Anderson's note on the Donald Grant book As It Is Written. Found in the unused manuscript pile from The Thrill Book under the name De Lysle Ferree Cass, this short novel was attributed to Smith based on some very convincing circumstantial evi-

ence. Recent evidence now suggests a writer named Cass really did exist, highlighting the problems any researcher faces when put in the position of having to rely on subjective analysis of a piece of work to verify its authorship.

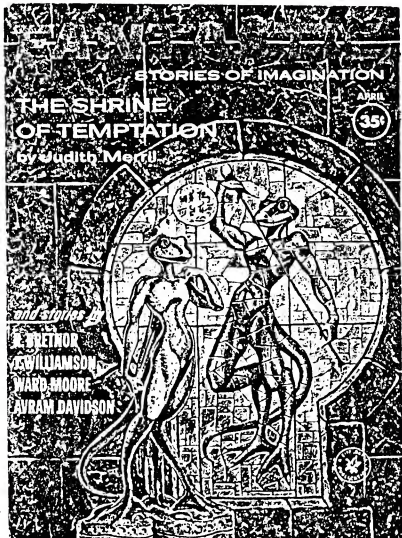
This book is not a must. It might have had more value if it

included materials written about Smith, as well as by him, and it is already in need of an update thanks to the "Unexpurgated Clark Ashton Smith" series being published by Necronomicon Press. Still, with the care devoted to its contents and appearance, it is a worthy endeavor recommended for the Smith fan.

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COVER: MS page from "The Tale of Satampra Zeiros"
(John Hay Library of Brown University,
showing Smith's sketch of Tsathaggua amidst
Hyperborean flora and fauna. (Logo, based
on Smith's signature, by Robert H. Knox)

PAGE 36: The illustration used for this cover was given
to Smith by Fantastic editor Cele Goldsmith
in 1961, with the request that Smith write a
story around it. The story that resulted was
Smith's last, "The Dart of Rasasfa."

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